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SANGAMON COUNTY OLD SETTLERS REUNION, NEW BERLIN, AUGUST 28, 1912.

The old settlers of Sangamon county, fast decreasing in number until scarcely a score of those who remember the great snow, gathered together at New Berlin, August 28, 1912, for the annual grand reunion of the Old Settler's Association. Young folks, as well as old, were there in abundance, and the crowd of visitors in attendance numbered close to the three thousand mark.

Although it had been announced that Hon. J. Hamilton Lewis could not be present to deliver the address of welcome, Everett Jennings, of Chicago, proved an able substitute, and delivered an eloquent address. Dr. W. N. McElroy and George M. Morgan, of Springfield, were the other speakers of the day.

The program was opened at 9:30 o'clock, with music by the Capitol City band, after which the the Rev. Mr. McElroy delivered the invocation. L. D. Wiley welcomed the visitors to the town with a few brief remarks. James Maxcy, former president of the association, responded, after which the Rev. Mr. McElroy delivered his address.

In dwelling upon reminiscences of the early days, Dr. W. N. McElroy, one of the earliest preachers of the gospel in this part of the State, said in part:

"I have been a resident of Illinois for more than eighty-two years. I came after the deep snow, so I am no snow bird. The pioneers were here when I came. I may have preached to some of them, but they were mostly gone before my time. There were others, kind of second bottom pioneers, and of them I shall mostly speak to-day.

"The history of a country is not when you give dates of events and who was governor and who was judge and which political party prevailed

in such and such an election and so on. The true history of a land is the history of its people, of their condition, character, environment, social life, industrial pursuits, customs, business, education and religion.

"So I am to go down into the depths of the past, in the corner of memory and try to bring up to you a picture of early times in central Illinois and Sangamon county.

"First as to the country. The lay of the land was the same then as now, but the conditions were vastly different. The settlement was scattered along the skirts of the timber. The prairies, unless they were small, were uninhabited, great billowy seas of waving grass in the summer and swept by storms in the winter.

"About the distant groves and timber lines occasionally was to be seen the ascending smoke from the settlers' cabin fire. The towns were few and small, built near some stream or on some hillside or hill-top. It was primitive nature, and though lonely, entrancing in beauty.

"The soil was rich, then as now. Crops were as bountiful, but the people were comparatively poor. There was an occasional brick or frame house, but the houses were mostly built of logs and the larger part of them had but one room, some two and an outhouse, some four, two below and two above.

"I know of a house of one room 18x18 feet that housed a family of ten, was parlor, sitting room, kitchen, hall, sleeping rooms and church combined.

"The cooking utensils were primitive in those early days. There were no cooking stoves, scarcely. There was a fireplace, a crane upon which the pots were hung; ovens, skillets, sometimes a reflector in which to bake biscuits. It was hard on the cook, but oh, the glorious meals they prepared.

"Everything was plenty but money. Wheat brought 25 cents; corn, 8 or 10 cents; dressed pork, from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per hundred weight; eggs, 3 cents per dozen; and calico was 25 cents a yard, coffee, 25 cents a pound; salt was dear, brown sugar, 10 cents per pound, etc.

The money was known as wild cat money, to-day it might be good, tomorrow worthless.

"The farm implements were crude. The plows had metal points and shares, wooden mould boards and the plowman carried a paddle

hung in a string to clean the dirt off of it. Then came the patent Cary plow, all metal, then the diamond plow share and mould board all in one piece, and finally improvement after improvement until we have the plow of today, where the farmer rides and turns two or three furrows at a time.

"The present cultivator was evolved from a shovel plow, which in turn became a double share.

"The harvesting implement was first a sickle, then a cradle, then a reaper, which dropped the sheaf behind it, then the McCormick, where it was raked to one side and finally the self binder and header of the present.

"The first thresher was a flail, the second a box with a cylinder, run by horse power, and a man stood and raked the straw away and the wheat was separated from the chaff with a hand wind mill. Then came the separator, the stacker, the traction engine and the great threshers of the present.

"There were no railroads, not many good roads—the pack horse followed the trail.

MEN OF THE AGE.

In speaking of the men of the age, Mr. McElroy said:

"The meaning of the word 'Illinois' is 'the land of men.' The environments of men have something to do in the making of them. The broad prairies and vast expanse of earth and sky enlarge the human mental vision as well as the natural one. They produce men of vigorous bodies and broad minds.

SOME IMMORTAL NAMES.

"Let us look at a few of those immortal names that were not born to die. In the very early days there were such men as Captain James Moore, Shadrach Bond, Judge Edgar, John Doyle, one of the first school teachers of Illinois; the Whitesides, John Cook, Israel Dodge, John Rice Jones, William Beggs, Ninian Edwards, John Kirkpatrick, Charles R. Matheny, John Reynolds, Governor French, Governor Ford, Governor Carlin, Thomas Forsythe, Matthew Duncan, Robert Blackwell, Daniel P. Cook, Nathaniel Pope and Governor Coles, one of the greatest

and best men in early Illinois history. These and others who came later helped to make Illinois what it is today. In our own county James N. Brown, General Henry and such men as John Williams, Major Iles, James Riddle and hosts of others, too numerous to mention. In statesmanship there were such men as Lyman Trumbull, Owen Lovejoy, Richard Yates, Sr., E. D. Baker. There were no men more eloquent than these, nor orators of ancient or modern times whose lips distilled the honey of speech more charmingly and more convincingly and more persuasively. And what shall we say of Douglas who rose from swaying the ferule in a country school to swaying multitudes in senates, of Palmer, and the immortal Lincoln, the greatest man of America, and growing greater as the years pass. There he towers over all as Mount Blanc rises and lowers with frost capped summit over the snow capped peaks lying in its shadow. He of whom Douglas said, 'He was like some mountain height which caught the first beams of the rising sun and was burnished into glory by its beams, while the dwellers in the valleys were slumbering in their shadows and delvers in the copper mines were enwrapped in total darkness.'

"And at the bar such men as Breese, Puterbaugh, Higby, Stevens, Logan and many others as worthy.

MEN OF MINISTRY.

"And in the Christian ministry, where will you find men such as Peter Akers, Peter Cartwright, Peter Boning, Hooper Crews, Charles Holiday, Samuel H. Thompson, John Drew, W. L. Deneen, Philo Judson, S. R. Beggs, Richard Harvey and Seth Botwell and John Bergen, James Leaton and John VanCleve and James Emmet Walsh, the eloquent, and Jonathan Stamper, these and hosts of others preached the gospel in demonstration of the spirit and with power. Though gone from us, their works live.

"Among the educators such men as Dr. Sturtevant, Professor J. B. Turner, Edwards, Moore, Munsell, Brooks and Beecher and Ballman and Dempster and others.

"These are the men who laid the foundations wrought upon the structure and dying transmitted it to our hands. May we rear it in the magnificence with which they planned it and leave to our children still to adorn and beautify."

AFTERNOON PROGRAM.

In the afternoon, following a selection by the Capital City and New Berlin bands, a letter was read from M. G. Wadsworth, an old settler of Sangamon county, now living in Denver. Mr. Wadsworth is well remembered by the old members of the association, and the letter was written on the advice of Isaac R. Diller, the secretary of the association, who is visiting at Denver.

The letter follows:

"DENVER, COLORADO.

To the Old Settlers, and also the Young Settlers, of Sangamon County, in Annual Reunion Assembled, This 28th Day of August, 1912:

Hearty good wishes to all and singular, and many returns of the day.

Everyone of the warmest friends of the Sangamon County Old Settler's Association, from its inception in 1859, and for twenty years (from 1880 to 1900) a humble member of the executive board, the writer trusts that he will not be regarded as an intruder in addressing this letter to the reunion, being unable to be present in person.

All of the original old settlers of Sangamon have for many long years moldered into dust, and nearly all of those of the next generation of pioneers have followed their predecessors. Even of the contemporaries of the writer, the greater portion have been consigned to that bourne from whence no traveler returns.

In the early forties, there being no stores in southern Sangamon, the people of that region were compelled to make frequent trips to the capital city and county seat. The writer, though but a youth at that time, went to Springfield as often as he could find opportunity—to trade, to attend political meetings and other gatherings, and, more than anything else, just to go 'to town.' At that time there were but few citizens of Springfield of any prominence, either in the professions or in business, whom I did not recognize, at least 'by sight,' though a majority of them probably were not aware that such a chap as I existed.

SOME PIONEERS OF SPRINGFIELD.

Often, since attaining advanced age, has the subscriber while walking about the old State house (now court house) square, imagined that it was the people with the figures and features of those who were familiar

to his vision in 'life's May morning long ago.' I will mention the names of some of the residents of sixty-five and seventy years ago, as I remember them, confining myself exclusively, lest I become tedious, to residents of the city:

Abraham Lincoln, Judge Treat, John Calhoun, J. L. Lamb, N. W. and B. S. Edwards, William I. Ferguson, A. G. Herndon and sons, W. H. and Elliott, Judge Logan, S. A. Douglas, J. C. Conkling, Matheny brothers, Simeon Francis and brothers, George R. Weber and brothers, Dr. Merriman, E. D. Baker, John T. Stuart, John Williams, Iles brothers, A. Elliott and son, Wesley; Revs. Charles Dresser, A. Hale, J. G. Bergen, A. J. Kane and W. S. Prentice; Profs. Springer and Brooks, B. C. Webster, Gershom Jayne, John Condell, F. Clinton, Joel Johnson, Asa Eastman, C. H. Lanphier, P. P. and Z. A. Enos, R. W. Diller, R. F. Ruth, Sr.; Busher brothers, S. W. Robbins, Judge Moffit, Thomas Lewis, S. M. Tinsley, John DeCamp, P. C. Canedy, T. S. Little, J. Capps, Obed Lewis, Enoch Moore, Hickox brothers, William Lavelly, and son, E. R.; Erastus Wright, E. B. Pease, W. W. Watson, John E. Roll, J. S. Bradford, A. Y. Ellis, William B. Fonday, James Bell, Charles R. Hurst, John W. Smith, E. Dick Taylor, John B. Watson, S. S. Elder, A. Camp, George Pasfield, E. R. Wiley, N. H. Ridgely and sons, and scores of others I will not take space and time to mention.

With cordial wishes for the indefinite perpetuation of the Sangamon County Old Settlers' Society, and the lives of all who are now or may hereafter be connected therewith, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

M. G. WADSWORTH."

OLDEST ELK IN UNITED STATES.

Colonel William Baker of Bolivia, Ill., one of Sangamon county's older former residents, and who enjoys the distinction of being the oldest member of the order of Elks in the United States, made a few remarks following the reading of the letter. Mr. Baker was in the secret service during the administration of former Governor Richard Yates, Sr., and was an intimate friend of Governor Yates and Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Baker's talk dealt with reminiscences and anecdotes of the lives of both.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.

Officers of the association recently elected for the ensuing year, took up their duties. They are:

President—T. C. Smith, Rochester.

Secretary—Isaac R. Diller, Springfield (re-elected).

The members of the local committee which was in charge of the entertainment yesterday are: E. A. Rosch, president of the village board, chairman; L. D. Wiley, treasurer; S. T. Dunlay, secretary.

Oldest of all the men of early days in Sangamon county, present at the reunion, is John G. Park, of New Berlin, who has passed the ninetieth mile post of his life. He recalled the early days with Levi Alsbury, now residing near Maroa, who is 89 years of age. Mr. Park has lived all his life practically at his present home near New Berlin. Mr. Alsbury lived near the home of Mr. Park until recently, and the two have been the closest friends during all that time. Mr. Alsbury came to Sangamon county when two years of age and has resided in Illinois since then.

Aunt Betsy Duncan, of Loami, who recently celebrated her one hundred and first birthday, was too feeble to be present at the celebration. She is the oldest woman in the county. Mrs. Martha Scott, living at Old Berlin, was the oldest woman present at the celebration. Mrs. Scott, familiarly known as Aunt Patsy, is a sister of War Governor Richard Yates. She was born in Warsaw, Kentucky, July 9, 1823, and came to Springfield in the fall of 1830, the year of the deep snow. In the spring of the following year she moved to Berlin, and has resided there ever since.

Mrs. Mary E. Child, 547 W. Grand av., Springfield, was the oldest woman present who was born in the county. Mrs. Child lived on a farm west of the city until about fourteen years ago, when she came to Springfield to live. She is the daughter of Moses K. Anderson, formerly Adjutant General of Illinois.